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TAGS: [AORC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [IN](#) [NP](#) [BT](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: BHUTAN WILL ABSTAIN ON CHR RESOLUTION ON CUBA WITH US SUPPORT ON THE REFUGEE SITUATION

REF: STATE 49957

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford, for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Bhutan has agreed in principle to abstain on the CHR resolution on Cuba, but has specifically asked for stronger US support and understanding on the issue of the refugee camps in Nepal. Bhutanese Ambassador Tshering stated during an April 14 phone call with the Ambassador. He commented that he would like a "gentlemen's agreement" with the US that if Bhutan votes in a way favorable to the US on the Cuba resolution, that the US would support a plan for Bhutan to only accept Category 1 refugees and dismantle the refugee camps in Nepal. Tshering argued that the refugees living in Nepal are not of strategic importance to the US, but are of vital strategic importance to the Royal Government of Bhutan.

¶2. (C) Tshering asserted after the abstention last year regarding Cuba, Bhutan lost friends and annoyed a number of countries which accused Bhutan of breaking ranks. The RGOB would still like to strengthen its position with the US. He stated that Bhutan would support the US on the Cuba resolution and "other areas where you need our support," on the understanding that the US will support the Bhutanese on the issue of the camps in Nepal by specifically indicating its support for Bhutan to accept Category 1 refugees and to then push for dismantling the camps with the balance of refugees going elsewhere.

¶3. (C) Tshering added that there seems to be a misunderstanding in Washington that the Bhutanese are delaying the implementation of the Dewey/Wangchuck agreement. He reiterated that the RGOB is waiting for the Government of Nepal to respond to the US authored plan and begin meetings of the two Ambassadors here in Delhi. Tshering (who is credentialed to Kathmandu) noted that he has also sought an appointment with the King of Nepal in order to discuss the matter, but has not received a response. He believes Bhutan should not be accused of dragging its feet when it has made an offer to cooperate, which remains in place today, but has never received a response indicating willingness by Nepal to engage in negotiations.

Comment

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¶4. (C) The Ambassador agrees with the Bhutanese point of view and believes that is also best reflects the realities on the ground. It is likely that Bhutan will only accept Category 1 refugees, and US efforts to resolve the problem have begun to reflect this reality. The Ambassador recommends we accept the Bhutanese offer.

MULFORD